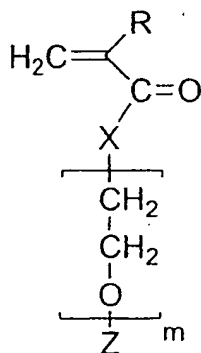


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Previously presented): Water-swellaable sealing composition comprising a matrix formed by rubbers and a particulate material having a particle diameter of from 5 to 5,000 μm distributed therein,

wherein the material comprises a crosslinked polymer composition which comprises at least one polymer in which the content of monomer units derived from nonionic hydrophilic acrylates or methacrylates makes up at least 30 mol%, wherein the nonionic hydrophilic acrylates or methacrylates correspond to the general formula



wherein R = H or a methyl group, X = O or NH, m = 3 to 1,000 and Z = H or a C₁-C₄-alkyl radical.

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2. (Previously presented): Sealing composition according to claim 1, wherein the rubber is vulcanized or crosslinked to form an elastomer or vulcanized rubber.

3. (Currently amended): Sealing composition according to claim 1 [[or 2]], wherein $m = 5$ to 200.

4. (Currently amended): Sealing composition according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein an open-pore foam structure having a density of from 0.4 to 2 g/cm³ is present.

5. (Currently amended): Sealing composition according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein the material has an average particle size of from 100 to 800 μm .

6. (Currently amended): Use of a water-swellaable sealing composition according to ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 as a sealing and absorption material with respect to electrolyte-containing water during repeated wet-dry cycles.

Claims 7 and 8 (Canceled).